

Georgians may have too pessimistic a view of their own country. As a recent pre-electoral assessment from the National Democratic Institute (NDI) points out, Georgia has implemented several key democratic reforms in recent years. New institutions ensure the accuracy of the voters' list or regulate party financing. Amendments to the electoral code in late 2011 and early 2012 introduced a raft of positive changes although the failure to redraw electoral districts (which range from 6,000 to 158,000 voters) means some votes are worth less than others. Recent "must carry" provisions will improve opposition parties' access to the media by obliging cable providers to transmit all television channels with news programmes during the sixty-day campaign period. In all, the "2012 electoral process is more formalised and regulated compared to past elections", the NDI concludes.

Even so, the dark side of Georgian politics, which Thomas de Waal has likened to "a blood feud", has been all too evident since Mr. Ivanishvili entered politics in October last year. Georgia's richest man remains without Georgian citizenship, an absurd situation of which most of his compatriots disapprove; the sooner that is resolved, the better. The Chamber of Control stands accused of levying disproportionate fines on the Georgian Dream movement, which Mr. Ivanishvili has refused to pay. (It has responded by seizing some of his assets). And before Parliament adopted the must carry provisions, Channel 9, a new television station co-owned by Mr. Ivanishvili's wife, and Global TV, the only broadcaster that carried it, suffered from almost continuous harassment.

Both sides continue to vilify each other, complaining of harassment, improper campaign spending, attempted bribery of state officials and abuse of administrative resources. A debate in the European Parliament on 4th July about Georgian politics reached similar extremes. As punch-ups during Georgian Dream campaign meetings in the central Georgian villages of Mereti on 26th June and Kareleti on 12th July suggest, it could get nastier still.

Yet Mr. Ivanishvili's political awakening has also awoken Georgian voters. Huge, peaceful rallies have taken place across the country, far beyond anything seen in recent years. Many more Georgians (75%) now plan to vote in October's elections than intended to so in September last year (51%), polls show. And the political debate is increasingly focused on issues that matter to ordinary Georgians, not just personalities.

Georgian Dream unveiled some of their plans in May: cutting utility costs, investing in agriculture, free universal health insurance and increased pensions. Vano Merabishvili, the former interior minister who became prime minister in late June, announced the government's four-year post-election programme shortly after taking office. He too wants to boost pensions, provide universal health insurance, and invest in agriculture. Mr. Merabishvili has also set up a new ministry to tackle unemployment (roughly 34% of Georgians say they are unemployed, compared with an official rate unemployment rate of 16%), and promises to provide each family with vouchers worth \$600.

Does Mr. Merabishvili's appointment indicate that Mikheil Saakashvili, the president, is unlikely to become prime minister once his term in office expires in early 2013? As one of the few big beasts of Georgian politics, Mr. Merabishvili would certainly be hard to shove aside. At any rate, slightly more Georgians would oppose such a job-swap à la Putin than would approve of it.

Reassuringly, 55% of Georgians surveyed think the elections will be well conducted,

and only 21% fear falsification. But there is little room for complacency. Mr. Ivanishvili has said that if he has any evidence of vote-rigging by the authorities, he will call for street protests. For most foreign observers, and many Georgians, that would be a step backwards. Yet 27% of those polled say he would be justified in doing so. Come October, that sentiment could matter.

While most Georgians are focused on who will win, Georgia's allies say the credibility of the electoral process is key. As the NDI states, "further development of democratic institutions and practices offer the best chance for western integration and for long-term prosperity and stability." With the political temperature likely to rise further in coming months, Georgia's politicians would do well to bear that in mind. Will they?

IN HONOR OF ALEXANDER COCKBURN

HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, August 2, 2012

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of Alexander Cockburn, the bold Irish-American journalist who passed away after a courageous, private battle with cancer. He left this world on Saturday, July 21, 2012 at the youthful age of 71.

Alexander Cockburn was born in Scotland on June 6, 1941 and spent most of his childhood living in Ireland. He attended the University of Oxford and earned a degree in English literature and language in 1963. Alexander became a permanent resident of the United States in 1973, where he wrote for several noteworthy publications. He spent his first ten years in the U.S. writing for *The Village Voice*, an alternative weekly magazine based in New York City. He then became a writer for *The Nation* until the time of his death, in addition to a variety of publications including *The Wall Street Journal* and *New York Press*. Alexander was also the co-editor of *CounterPunch*, a newsletter in which he frequently expressed his controversial, unfiltered opinions for which he became renowned and deeply respected.

Friends and co-workers remember Alexander for his remarkable talents. He could quickly write dazzling columns that were full of passion and conviction. He was unafraid to speak his mind, often writing in opposition to his colleagues at the same publications. His bold style set him apart as a truly remarkable journalist.

Alexander died on July 21, two years after he was diagnosed with cancer. He kept his illness a secret and continued to write until the day of his death, refusing to let cancer get in the way of his passion. He will be missed by his family, friends, and many readers.

Mr. Speaker and colleagues, please join me in honoring Alexander Cockburn, the talented journalist and audacious man who has left a lasting legacy on the world of literature and the world at large.

TRIBUTE TO CPL MARCUS W.
DANDREA, UNITED STATES MA-
RINE CORPS

HON. ANDER CRENSHAW

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, August 2, 2012

Mr. CRENSHAW. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor one of Florida's brightest sons, Corporal Marcus W. Dandrea, United States Marine Corps, from Jacksonville. On February 24th of this year, CPL Dandrea, a member of Charlie Company, stepped on a pressure plate while patrolling a mountain top in Sangin, Helmond Province. His recovery has been fast and furious, as he is already moving to start the next phase of his already inspiring life. However, his U.S. Marine Corps active duty service will continue through his wife, Lance Corporal Victoria Dandrea. They have three children, Naomi, DJ, and Micah. I ask that this poem, penned in their honor by Albert Caswell, be placed in the RECORD.

INTEL

Intel . . .
In every battle . . .
And in every fight . . .
And in every war,
there is but such need to so bring such in-
sight!
Intel . . . Intelligence,
is what a war's life blood so ignites . . .
leading us all to victory by shedding such
light!
To illuminate the darkness of war,
to burn bright!
For there are but only a few who so gather
such insights . . .
For there are The Ph.D's of the battlefield
who fight . . .
The men who are but armed with mind of
might,
and with heart's of steel in sight!
Top Secret!
The United States Marine!
One of our brightest of all shades of green!
Jar Heads,
who with such Intelligence so fight . . . and
so convene!
Where Technology So Meets Might!
Saving lives,
but with all of the knowledge that they so
provide . . .
As from all of this,
such battle plans are so devised!
As many times,
making the difference between death and
life!
Darkness or Light!
So that out across a Nation,
a mother will not have to so cry this night!
As warriors drop in from no where,
from out of sight!
For they are both beauty and the beast,
all at their height!
Fighting with their brains and bodies,
oh what an awesome sight!
Putting, The Stealth in Technology!
As how wars are won,
all in the cover of day and or night . . .
As when it all so depends on who lives or dies
As is the high cost so compromised!
As that's where you will find,
all of their most magnificent of all silent
battle cries!
As it was out on such a secret mission,
when this young Marine's life would almost
not reach its fruition!
As an IED went off,
as so close to death he'd lie!
As right there but on its very edge,
as when Marcus so reached so deep down
with something so left inside!

To so cheat death!
 As from somewhere so deep . . . so deep . . .
 so deep . . . down inside . . .
 From this Marine's heart, but came his battle cry!
 To somehow stay alive . . .
 And from that moment on, he was gone!
 Moving up and moving on!
 As this Marine got up and ran towards recovery . . .
 For he had a life to live,
 and to this our world so much more to give . . .
 Oooh . . . Rahhhh! Jar Head!
 For, it's far better to die for something . . .
 than to live for nothing at all!
 And that's why you joined the Core
 And your fine heart so answered that most noble call!
 For some people are but put upon this earth,
 To So Teach Us! To So Reach Us! And So Bless Us,
 with all of their fine worth!
 As this fine son from Jacksonville,
 gives us all of us such a thrill . . .
 As you has so shone us what so comes first!
 For this United States Marine,
 is one of the greatest things our nations has ever seen!
 The only secret he could not so keep!
 Is what so runs in your most magnificent heart so very deep!
 That which so out shines them all!
 For Marcus, you won't cry and he won't crawl!
 As he you can climb any mountain, of them all!
 And if I ever had a son, I'd wish he'd have a heart half as tall!
 Surely, Marcus you are but one of Florida's Most Brightest of All Son's!
 Because, up in heaven you need not arms nor even legs to run . . .
 And that's were you are going Marcus, one day my son!
 For you have so made our Lord so proud,
 with all of your inspiration and faith bestowed upon us all now!
 Maximus . . . Marcus . . . you've put the I in Intel this day!
 But, there are No Secrets . . .
 all in what you magnificent heart so says!
 For you are one of our Nation's, America's Best!
 Ooo . . . Rah Jar Head

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. BILL HUIZENGA

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, August 2, 2012

Mr. HUIZENGA of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall No. 537, 538, and 539, I was absent due to travel delays and inclement weather. Had I been present, I would have voted "no" on rollcall No. 537, and "yea" on rollcall Nos. 538 and 539.

CELEBRATING FIRST BOOK'S 20TH ANNIVERSARY

HON. DANNY K. DAVIS

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, August 2, 2012

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to ask the House of Representatives to join me in honoring First Book on the occasion of their twentieth anniversary and celebrating

their work on behalf of children in need, in Illinois and across the country.

First Book is a nonprofit that provides brand-new books and educational resources to schools and community programs serving children from low-income families. Since 1992 they have distributed over 90 million new books to kids in need.

First Book was founded twenty years ago by Peter Gold, Elizabeth Arky and Kyle Zimmer. After working with children in some of the poorest neighborhoods in the Nation's capital and seeing how their futures were limited by their lack of access to books and resources, they created First Book.

Ms. Zimmer continues to lead the organization today, and her vision and passion have helped First Book grow from a local nonprofit to a global social enterprise with an unsurpassed record of success.

First Book is set apart by more than their deep commitment to the children, teachers and community leaders they serve. By working with the publishing industry to create new and innovative ways to get books and resources to children in need, they are creating a groundbreaking and self-sustaining model that benefits both the donors and the recipients.

First Book is also committed to empowering teachers and program leaders, ensuring that the educators closest to the children choose the books that have the greatest chance of turning those young people into lifelong readers.

I ask the House to join me in honoring First Book and further ask the members to introduce First Book to teachers and community leaders in their home districts. The more schools and local programs join First Book's network, the closer we will come to achieving equity in education for all our children.

HONORING THE SOLDIERS, AIRMEN AND AVIATORS IN THE BATTLE OF DIEPPE 70 YEARS AGO

HON. DALE E. KILDEE

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, August 2, 2012

Mr. KILDEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute and to honor the sacrifice 70 years ago this month of more than 3,600 Allied soldiers, airmen and aviators in the Battle of Dieppe during a critically pivotal point in World War II. The Dieppe Raid, also known as Operation Jubilee, was an Allied attack on the German-occupied port of Dieppe on the northern coast of France on 19 August 1942. The assault began at 5:00 a.m. and by 10:50 a.m. the Allied commanders were forced to call a retreat. Over 6,000 infantrymen, predominantly Canadian, were supported by limited Royal Navy and large Royal Air Force contingents. Among Allied soldiers who took part in the Battle of Dieppe were 50 U.S. Rangers, including one from Michigan, and two additional civilian support personnel from my State. Almost 60 percent who made it ashore in that crushing battle 70 years ago were either killed, wounded, or captured.

This battle became a critical learning point for the Allies who less than two years later launched D Day in June 1944 in the invasion that eventually led to the defeat of Nazi Ger-

many. "I have no doubt," said Lord Mountbatten, who helped plan the raid, "that the Battle of Normandy was won on the beaches of Dieppe."

On August 18, one of our esteemed former colleagues, former Congressman and former state Senator James Barcia, and Viet Nam veteran Terry Watson, who is supervisor of Bangor Township, Michigan will represent the United States during memorial ceremonies in Dieppe, France. The ceremonies will honor the courage and sacrifice of the men who took part in Operation Jubilee, including three Michigan men who have since passed away. They are: Pfc Stanley Bush, Walter A. Bresnahan and James C. Moseley.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all of my colleagues in the United States House of Representatives to join me today in honoring those whose sacrificed 70 years ago at Dieppe, France and helped win the war that saved our Nation from the tyranny of Nazi Germany.

TRIBUTE TO LAURA FROEHLICH

HON. KEN CALVERT

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, August 2, 2012

Mr. CALVERT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and pay tribute to a dear friend of mine, Laura Froehlich. Laura passed away on Wednesday, August 1, 2012. As a pillar of the Moreno Valley and Riverside County military communities, her sudden passing was a shock to all and she will be dearly missed.

Laura served honorably in the Air Force and began volunteering in 1985 through the Moreno Valley Military Affairs Committee, which she eventually chaired. March Air Reserve Base (MARB) was and still is heavily used by Marines from nearby Twentynine Palms and Camp Pendleton bases. As increasing numbers of troops began to flow through the MARB facilities in the buildup to Operation Iraqi Freedom, Laura wanted to ensure that the troops leaving and returning from war received a timely farewell and warm welcome, a far cry from the public indifference and occasional contempt experienced by veterans returning from Vietnam, such as her father. She had organized a similar effort during the Persian Gulf War of 1991.

With the help of her team of more than 100 volunteers, she transformed MARB's austere Hangar 385 into a welcoming center where troops could relax and enjoy good food and entertainment during their 6–8-day layovers. Her motto was, "When they come to March, they're taken care of."

Laura, fondly known as the "Flag Mama" because of her patriotic attire, made it a point to be present for the arrival and departure of virtually every MARB flight carrying troops to and from the Central Command Area of Responsibility. She even purchased a motor home to park in the lot near the hangar so she could go quickly between home and the base. At the end of 2008, Laura had individually greeted more than 200,000 men and women on 4,000 flights. When the troops saw "Miss Laura" at the base to shake their hands and give them a hug, it was how they knew they were home.

Regardless of the recognition she received, Laura remained humble and modest. Upon returning home to California from the Pentagon